

JOHN T. ORENDORFF HOUSE

72-80 West Main Street

In plan, this c. 1875 house is basically a Greek Cross (with its western member missing) composed of two, small, pediment-roofed, clankboard buildings. This strict geometry is broken at the southeast corner by a hexagonal, 2-story, conical roof tower, and by a glassed-in entrance porch. Nevertheless, the Greek Cross plan of the house makes the building unique in the City, in that it brazenly presents gable ends to the street. The building also nicely serves, with its intersecting members, to represent the fact that the lot it sits on is made up of an intersection of two of Westminster's thoroughfares, Carroll and West Main Streets.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

CAR 440  
0704404504

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

John T. Orendorff House

AND/OR COMMON

Thomas Insurance Agency

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

78-80 West Main Street (MD 32)

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Carroll

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

☒ OCCUPIED

—UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

—YES: UNRESTRICTED

—NO

**PRESENT USE**

—AGRICULTURE

☒ COMMERCIAL

—EDUCATIONAL

—ENTERTAINMENT

—GOVERNMENT

—INDUSTRIAL

—MILITARY

—MUSEUM

—PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

—RELIGIOUS

—SCIENTIFIC

—TRANSPORTATION

—OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Thomas Insurance Agency, Inc.

Telephone #: 848-6600

STREET & NUMBER

78 West Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21157

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carroll County Office Building

Liber #: 414

Folio #: 232

STREET & NUMBER

Center Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

STATE  
Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                     |                                       | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD                 | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR                 | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED    |   |   |

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Resting on its fieldstone foundation, the Orendorff house fills lot 1 of "Pigman's Addition", a lot located at the northwest corner of the intersection of West Main Street (St. Route 32) and Carroll Street in Westminster. The lot is angular physically, as it slopes southward towards Main Street, and politically, fittingly, as well, as Carroll Street cuts it diagonally to the southeast.

In plan, the house is basically a Greek Cross (with its western member missing) composed of two, small, pediment-roofed, clapboard buildings. This strict geometry of form is broken at the southeast corner by a hexagonal, two-story, conical-roofed tower, and by a glassed-in entrance porch. The tower has 5 double-hung sash windows on its eastern three sides -- three on the second floor, and two below. Windows are similarly treated, in that they have central pieces of clear glass surrounded by small squares of stained glass on their upper sashes, with clear glass below. However, a difference is that the lower sash of the ground floor windows is a single pane, but above there are two vertical panes.

Although the ground stories differ markedly one from another, the second stories are very similar in each section, as are the pedimented gables. Basically, each limb of the cross has one bay per side on the second story. Further, these are, nearly without exception, 2/2 windows; the exceptions are to the south of the central member which has a pair of 2/2 windows, to the north of the cross member which is a glass and aluminum door, and to the east of the rear of the central member which is a small modern 1/1 window. All gables have central 1/2 windows centrally placed - each window has central surrounded upper pane. Gables are covered in octagonal shingles; the area of the pediment above the window is slightly raised.

Black tin covers all roofs, including the shed roof that covers the already mentioned second-story door - a door which is reached by a single flight of wooden steps rising from the north. Various other shed-roofed additions cover the ground floor of the northern member. The largest of these small porches is approached by a modern glass and aluminum door on the ground floor.

Otherwise, ground floor openings consist of a pair of 2/2 windows on the pedimented side of the eastern member's ground floor, and a modern, multi-paned, hip-roofed addition gutting out of the Main Street side of the central member. Black louvered shutters flank all windows on the ground and second stories except those on the tower and the modern one to the south towards Main Street. The shutters contrast nicely with the crisp, newly-painted, white, wooden trim, compliment the black of the roof, and help, along with the trim, set off the deep olive green that the clapboard is painted.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

| PERIOD  |  | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW       |   |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC          | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION                  | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS                     | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION                     | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY               | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING                   | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT        | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-     | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY                      | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION                     |   |  |

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1875

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Orendorff's house is significant both for its innate idiosyncracies as well as for the way it fits into the overall streetscape both physically and symbolically. The Greek Cross plan of the house is in itself unique in the City, and the plan causes the house to have other attributes that set it apart from its sister dwellings. Primary among these is the fairly simple fact that it unshamedly puts the gable end to the street. This simple phenomenon, which in most communities would go unnoticed, flies directly in the face of what was, apparently, a basic tenet of the City's architecture: that thou shall only have the broad sweep of thy roof facing the street. Other houses in the City, before and after Orendorff's house, went to enormous pains to put their gables to the side - this, in large part, explains why the long, deep, but narrow (three bay) houses we see up and down Main Street are built in two sections, a long, deep section would run back a lot from the street and would have had the gable end to the street; however, this was frowned upon, and so, to hide the gable, another smaller (usually square) section would be built perpendicular to it. Orendorff didn't feel the need to go to this trouble and instead placed gable ends towards Main Street as well as towards Carroll Street. Of course, it's probable that the site, an intersection, played an important part in defining the house's shape or, rather, causing it to be shaped as it is: if it were less exposed, if one only saw it from one direction (from Main Street) there would be no need for concern about its different approaches for the obvious and simple reason that it would have only one exposure. It also seems worth at least briefly mentioning, that if the intersection determined the shape of the house, it is equally evident to note that the shape of the house, nicely symbolizes the site. Such a simple dual relationship seems a bit forced, until one realizes, with some surprise, that no other intersection in the City is treated in this way, that other intersections' buildings may make some acknowledgment of their location (by towers etc.) but only Orendorff seemed eager to explore other possible ways of matching his building to the unique features of a corner lot.

Unfortunately, early title information on the lot is sketchy. We know from the 1877 map of the City that a building of approximately the right size and shape was on lot 1, the corner of Carroll and West Main Streets. We also know from the 1887 City Directory that John T. Orendorff had his

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Being lot no. 1 of B. S. Pigman's Addition to Westminster.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Christopher Weeks, Consultant

March

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Westminster Historical Sites Survey

STREET &amp; NUMBER

TELEPHONE

c/o City Hall - Public Works Department

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Westminster

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

residence at 76 West Main Street, and that Orendorff had a store a couple of blocks to the east, at 20-22 West Main Street. So we know that the house existed in 1877, but it's probably safe to assume that the place was fairly new then; it seems highly unlikely that Westminster would have had a tower like this and implicated shingles on gables much before 1870. (There is no evidence to suggest that these are additions to an earlier building.) Orendorff's Will (Book 7, Page 262) left his property in trust in benefit of the St. Paul's Reformed Church; but problems ensued and an equity case (No. 8103) resulted in Carroll County National Bank's being appointed trustee to sell the land. It did this on June 29, 1949; the buyer was D. Sterling Young and wife, and the price was \$29,000. Young sold the land to the present owner on December 11, 1966.



CARR 440

78-80 W. Main St. Westmont

C. Weech 2/77

E. Jacinto



50  
10



56 8/3

E-1

CARR 440

78-80 W. Main St.  
Westminster

check 2/78

S. Fucile